

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 090294

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S/S-MR. ORTIZ

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 090294

NODIS

FOL REPEAT TEL AVIV 2673 SENT ACTION SECSTATE APRIL 14

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S E C R E T TEL AVIV 2673

NODIS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM TOON

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LE, US, SY, IS

SUBJECT: LEBANESE SUTIATION

REF: DAMASCUS 22190

1. WHILE I THINK MURPHY'S AIM IS LAUDABLE IN TRYING TO PUT THE SYRIAN MOVE INTO LEBANON INTO PERSPECTIVE, I WOULD HAVE THE MOST SERIOUS RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE COURSE OF ACTION SUGGESTED IN PARA 5 OF HIS MESSAGE, NAMELY, THAT WE SHOULD "PLAY A BIT OF A GAME OF MIRRORS WITH THE ISRAELIS" SO THAT THEY DO NOT REACT MILITARILY AGAINST THE SYRIANS.

SECRET

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PAGE 02 STATE 090294

2. THE ISRAELI MILITARY AUTHORITIES HAVE, OF COURSE, BEEN WATCHING THE SYRIAN MOVEMENTS LIKE THE HAWKS THEY ARE; BASED ON THEIR AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY THEY TOLD US EARLIER THIS WEEK THEY HAD COUNTED A TOTAL OF 54 TANKS IN THE SYRIAN BRIGADE THEN STRADDLING THE LEBANESE-SYRIAN BORDER. TO TRY TO TALK THEM OUT OF WHAT THEY HAVE SEEN WOULD NOT APPEAR TO BE A VERY PROFITABLE EXERCISE.

3. RATHER, I STRONGLY URGE THAT WE CONTINUE OUR CLOSE CONTACTS WITH THE ISRAELI AUTHORITIES AND BE AS FORTH-COMING AS WE CAN IN OUR ASSESSMENT OF THE DEVELOPING SITUATION. IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS THEY ARE PROBABLY IN A BETTER POSITION THAN WE, AT LEAST AT THE AMEMBASSY IN TEL AVIV, TO PLAY GAMES ON SYRIAN MILITARY DISPOSITIONS AND ACTIVITIES.

TOON

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